Course Syllabus

Jump to Today ✎ Edit

BIOC 215: BIOSCIENCES LAB TEACHING Spring 2020 Syllabus

MEETING TIME AND LOCATION

Location will be in the BioSciences teaching lab in Anderson Biological Laboratories (ABL) 126. Time will vary depending on which laboratory section the participant leads.

INSTRUCTOR

Dr. Beth Beason-Abmayr (bbeason@rice.edu (mailto:bbeason@rice.edu)): HBH 08A (temp office); ABL 102C (NEW office in Feb) / ABL 126 (lab); office hours are by appointment

I am conducting a study looking at teaching and learning. The purpose of this study is to determine the factors that influence teaching effectiveness and learning. Your participation in this study will last for the duration of the current semester and will entail activities no different from the regular activities you would otherwise engage in as part of the course. If you would like more information, please do not hesitate to ask. If you would like to opt out of the study, please talk to Dr. Beason as soon as possible.

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

BIOC 215 is an opportunity to learn and practice important skills related to teaching and professional behavior while assisting experienced faculty with laboratory instruction and feedback to students. It is also an opportunity to provide leadership by example to other teaching assistants and students in our laboratory courses. Overall learning goals and intended learning outcomes for teaching assistants are outlined below.

Goal 1: Recognize the importance of timely attention to responsibilities

We rely heavily on teaching assistants to provide our undergraduates the best possible laboratory experience. Timely feedack to individual students is particularly important, as it is through such feedback that they learn how to improve. Failure to meet these responsibilities can negatively impact a student's grade. A responsible teaching assistant

- shows up on time for lab
- posts individual feedback on notebook pages no later than midnight, five days past the relevant lab session
- provides the instructor with immediate weekly feedback on individual student performance

- responds to instructor queries and requests for information (usually sent by email) within 24 hours
- anticipates personal issues (e.g., illness or rescheduled classes or interviews) and makes arrangements with instructor to ensure that responsibilities are met

Goal 2: Understand how quality instruction and feedback can improve student performance

A successful learning experience is far more likely when observant and interactive teaching assistants provide timely and effective instruction and feedback. An effective teaching assistant

- interacts proactively with students in the lab rather than waiting for them to take the initiative
- guides students with regard to laboratory safety
- provides individual performance comments, both orally and written, that reflect substantive constructive feedback
- engages students when answering questions and providing instruction
- handles conflicts effectively
- takes the necessary initiatives to ensure fairness by, for example, working with other TAs to ensure that grading criteria are consistent from one TA to another and one lab section to another
- interacts with students in a professional manner, treating all of them equally with courtesy and respect

Goal 3: Recognize the necessity of teamwork in mentoring and in assessing student performance

Teamwork is essential to the successful realization of all of these goals. A teaching assistant who is a good team player

- contributes to discussions about experimental procedures
- posts queries and responds to queries about grading criteria and/or laboratory procedures when appropriate and/or necessary
- takes the initiative to refresh past understanding of methods, procedures, explanations, and theory
- promotes mastery of the material covered by the course by regularly communicating with one another
- shares specific observations and experiences with the rest of the team
- when necessary, picks up responsibilities of other TAs who are unable to carry them out
- readily handles an emergency or hazardous situation in the instructor's absence

REQUIRED EXPERIENCE

Participation in this course is by permission of instructor only and is based on performing well in the associated laboratory course (BIOC 311 or 313) in a prior semester.

COURSE STRUCTURE

Teaching assistant responsibilities differ depending on which laboratory course the student is leading. Examples of responsibilities include setting up/cleaning up the lab, demonstrating procedures, interacting with individual students, grading laboratory notebooks, answering questions both inside and outside of class,

and evaluating student lab performance.

ATTENDANCE POLICIES

Attendance at all laboratory meetings and performing all duties required of the associated laboratory course are essential. Absences can be excused due to illness or unexpected/unavoidable emergencies; students are expected to contact the instructor as soon as possible in the event of an emergency.

Students are expected to wear proper attire to lab, including closed-toe shoes and knee-length clothing, and to use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) as instructed. Additionally, they must adhere to safety guidelines when working in the lab.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Evaluation of student performance will be based on attending laboratory meetings and performing required duties responsibly and effectively. Throughout the semester, Reflections will be submitted in Canvas. There will be no required exams or papers. Course may be repeated for credit.

HONOR CODE POLICY

Teaching assistants (TAs) are expected to observe and maintain the Rice Honor Code in all of their lab-associated activities both inside and outside of class. TAs are expected to familiarize themselves with the Honor Code Policy for a specific lab course and to ask the instructor for clarification of any parts that are confusing or unclear. If a BIOC 215 student suspects a violation of the Honor Code for the lab course, she should submit a letter of accusation, along with all relevant evidence, to **honor@rice.edu** **(mailto:honor@rice.edu)** as soon as possible; if she would like to remain anonymous she may describe the incident to the instructor, who will then submit the accusation.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Course material will be delivered either digitally (online or email) or in person and may be visual (written documents, slides, videos, etc.), audio (videos, presentations, discussions), or interactive (questions, discussions, clickers, etc.). Course work will require answering questions online, safely performing laboratory procedures, grading lab notebooks, typing papers, reading written materials, discussing material with peers and students, and may include light lifting and sitting or standing for extended periods of time. Some interactive portions of lectures will not be available online; thus, students should choose or request seating where they are best able to view and hear presented materials.

Any student with a documented or suspected disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to *contact the instructor in person or by email before the first day of class*; all discussions will remain confidential. Students with disabilities should also contact Alan Russell (**alan.g.russell@rice.edu** **(mailto:alan.g.russell@rice.edu)**), Director, Disability Support Services (713-348-5841) before the first day of class.

Information contained in this course syllabus, other than the absence policies, may be subject to change

with reasonable advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Course Summary:

Date	Details	
Fri Jan 17, 2020	**Reflection 1: Semester Start (https://canvas.rice.edu/courses/29129/assignments/134402)**	due by 11:59pm
Fri Feb 7, 2020	**Reflection 2: Framing (https://canvas.rice.edu/courses/29129/assignments/134404)**	due by 11:59pm
Fri Feb 28, 2020	**Reflection 3: Methodology and Evaluation/Synthesis (https://canvas.rice.edu/courses/29129/assignments/134401)**	due by 11:59pm
Fri Apr 24, 2020	**Reflection 4: Communication and Semester End (https://canvas.rice.edu/courses/29129/assignments/134400)**	due by 11:59pm
Wed May 6, 2020	**Reflection 5: Final Reflection (https://canvas.rice.edu/courses/29129/assignments/134403)**	due by 11:59pm
	TA Leadership (https://canvas.rice.edu/courses/29129/assignments/134405)	